School report

Inspection of Clifton CofE Primary School

Cross Side, Clifton Village, Ashbourne, Derbyshire DE6 2GJ

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this small school, which is at the heart of the village community. From the moment they join their 'Clifton family' for the day, pupils know that it will be filled with learning and fun. Here, pupils thrive as individuals. They know there are staff they can go to if they have any worries. Equally importantly, they care for each other.

There is a highly ambitious early years curriculum. It sparks children's curiosity, aligns with their interests and ignites a love of learning. This high aspiration continues throughout the school. Pupils welcome this and respond by working hard in their lessons. They achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, including when they are out at community events or on school trips. They treat everybody with kindness and respect. Playtimes are sociable, positive experiences. Older pupils support younger pupils in organised games.

Pupils develop their character through taking positions of responsibility such as belonging to the school council or the eco-team. Pupils ascribe to the school vision 'let your light shine'. On a personal level, they strive to do their best at all times. As a part of the 'Clifton family', they celebrate and shine a light on the achievements of others.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed an exciting, challenging curriculum. It has identified and sequenced the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn in every subject. In many subjects, this leads to pupils achieving well. However, in a few wider curriculum subjects, the school has not identified the key concepts that should underpin learning to allow pupils to build knowledge over time. Pupils' learning in these subjects is not as secure as it could be. The school has not established a clear approach to teaching handwriting. This means that some pupils' letter formation is not as accurate as it could be.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at the earliest opportunity. It puts careful plans in place to support these pupils. It ensures that teachers are trained to adapt learning activities where necessary. This enables pupils with SEND to make the best possible progress through the curriculum.

The provision in the Reception Year is exceptionally well designed to meet the needs of the children. Exciting learning opportunities draw children in. Staff initiate high-quality discussions to extend children's learning and vocabulary. Children are very sociable and friendly. They show extremely high levels of interest in what they are doing. They make excellent progress through the curriculum as a result.

The school trains staff to deliver the early reading programme well. As soon as they start school, pupils begin learning about letters and their sounds. By the end of Year 1, most pupils have a strong knowledge of phonics and use this to read with increasing fluency

and accuracy. Any pupils who are in danger of falling behind are immediately identified and supported to catch up.

The school's approaches to checking pupils' learning are effective. Teachers use this information to address identified misconceptions and plan future learning.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are positive, engaged and respectful. They take responsibility for their own learning right from when they start school in the early years. Attendance is high. The school works with parents and carers to ensure that the vast majority of pupils are in school regularly and on time.

Pupils' learning is enriched through many exciting trips. The school makes up for its small size by joining the immediate and wider community for a variety of events. For example, pupils perform in musical and theatrical productions and support the traditional Ashbourne Royal Shrovetide Football game. All pupils take part in competitive sports. The school builds pupils' awareness and appreciation of fundamental British values, including the cultures and beliefs of others. Pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss world issues relating to equality and diversity.

Leaders have very high expectations and aspirations for all pupils' academic and wider education. These have been realised in most areas of the curriculum and all areas of personal development.

Parents love the school. They feel well informed about all aspects of school life. They feel that the school listens to any concerns they might have.

Staff agree that they are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the many professional development opportunities. Staff feel leaders have their well-being at the forefront of any decisions. They welcome the introduction of high-quality schemes of work, which has had a positive impact on workload.

Governors are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school. This has helped them to both support and challenge the school on its improvement journey.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the most important knowledge, underlying concepts and vocabulary that pupils need to learn has not been identified clearly enough. In these subjects, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not build their understanding or link learning over time as well as they could. They also find it difficult to articulate their learning. The school should ensure that key curriculum concepts and vocabulary are

identified and taught so that pupils know and remember more.

- The school does not have clear expectations and an agreed approach for teaching handwriting and presentation. This means that the quality of some pupils' written work is not as strong as it should be. The school should support pupils to produce written work of consistently high quality across the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	112811
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10379530
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christopher Collins
Headteacher	Jeanette Hart
Website	www.clifton.derbyshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school in the Diocese of Derby. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2024. The next inspection will take place within 5 years.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and a range of other staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and discussed their learning in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and while in lessons.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspectors also spoke to pupils and viewed examples of pupils' work in a range of other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed key documents, including the school's self-evaluation, action plans and monitoring records.

Inspection team

Liz Davidson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sylvie Newman	Ofsted Inspector

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